

PEOPLE & THINGS

By ATTICUS

THE most significant figure in American politics this year may turn out to be the new Speaker of the House — Mr. Sam Rayburn, the Democrat from Texas.

Rayburn is of a very different calibre from the average American politician, combining a rather chilly reserve with old-fashioned dignity. He neither likes slapping other politicians on the back nor being so slapped himself.

His speeches are short, infrequent and understated, but his choice of words is so distinguished and authoritative that when he rises he immediately has the full attention of the House.

Mister Sam

TEXAS is the proudest, and is often accused of being the most conceited, State in the Union. At a dinner in honour of another Texan, Senator Tom Connolly, when one speaker after another rose to extol the beauty and greatness of Texas, Mr. Rayburn got to his feet and sharply reminded the gathering that this was not a dinner in honour of Texas but of Connolly. It is a measure of his stature that the reprimand was swallowed by his home State.

After forty-two years in the House, Rayburn is one of the most powerful and admired personalities on Capitol Hill. When, the other day, President Eisenhower called the Republican and Democratic leaders of Congress to the White House for discussion of his 1955 legislative programme, he made a point of saying that he could not have chosen a better day for his annual message to Congress than next Thursday, January 6, as this was also the seventy-third birthday of "Mr. Sam."

Capability Page

ALARGE and loose-boned man in his late forties with a notable resemblance to a less whimsical Alastair Sim, Mr. Russell Page is probably the foremost garden-designer in Europe. There is nothing narrow in his scope, and in recent years he has taken on, along with many smaller acres, the Duke of Windsor's mill-house near Paris, a country house in the Ardennes for the King of the Belgians, the remodelling of Longleat, Signor Agnelli's famous villa La Leopolda at Villefranche-sur-Mer, all M. Marcel Boussac's properties and (technically one of the most taxing of all) the 1951 Battersea Pleasure Gardens.

Although many of his clients are, by any standards, exceedingly rich, Russell Page does not run to great size in his tastes. The lavish Edwardian garden is quite gone out, he told me when we met after his wedding last Thursday, and although the mechanical side of

landscape gardening is now easier than ever before, he prefers a quasi-medieval smallness. Gardening, he feels, should be a matter of attainable perfections; and he cited, as a model combination of plantsmanship and formal design, the garden laid out by Mr. Lawrence Johnson at Hidcote, near Chipping Campden, and now made over to the National Trust.

Planting for Pleasure

TRAINED as a painter at the Slade, Russell Page can say, with Constable, "I never saw an ugly thing in my life." "There's no such thing," he says, "as an ugly plant, or one that can't be made use of. You've just got to know how to handle them." Nor does he aim to leave a signature as plain as Capability Brown's. "I don't want people to say 'That must be by Russell Page.' I just want it to look inevitable and as if

being replaced by Winfield Liggett, Junior.

The Arbiter

ACERTAIN Lieutenant Alfred A. M. Gruenthal, a chemistry instructor at West Point, was the hard-pressed referee, and the contest was reported by such famous writers as Ring Lardner, Heywood Broun, Damon Runyon, Robert Benchley, Westbrook Pegler and Grantland Rice.

After exactly a month's play, on the night of January 8, the last trick was turned and the Culbertsons had won by 8,980 points. When Culbertson walked round the table to shake hands, Lenz turned his back on him, and that handshake was to be postponed until Lenz's eightieth birthday party last year.

The referee? He is now Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

Round the Galaxies

NEW YORK: "Look" magazine predicts for 1955: hair dyed pink to match pink milk wraps; minks now being bred with blue genes will produce powder-blue and black sapphire fur; women's lingerie will be pillar box red; men's suits will be in olive, khaki and bamboo colours. There will be vivid breakfast cereals coloured raspberry, orange and lemon; detergents will have a sugar base so that children will enjoy having their hair shampooed, and the edible suds will not need rinsing from dishes. There will be a ceremonial visit to London by a high Soviet official. Princess Margaret will marry.

HOLLYWOOD: Blanca Holmes, "Astrologer to the Stars," says that Britain comes under the best sign in the Zodiac — Aries, with Jupiter entering Leo. Anglo-American relations will continue friendly due to Gemini Sir Anthony Eden's profound understanding of America. A great year for Hollywood because Leo with Jupiter is favourable to the entertainment industry. Important year for British writers except those born under the sign of Scorpio.

PARIS: Louis-Marie Raclet in "Astres 55": Neptunes appear to be catastrophic for Hollywood and the morality of its pin-up stars.

In France it will be a particularly materialistic year—at times almost sordidly so. In the second quarter business profits will be higher than those declared for income tax. "Le Mag" Holkar in "L'Aurore" says that scientists will construct a true miniature sun whose creation will threaten the annihilation of all life. Therefore it will be a terrible year.

BERLIN: "Heim und Welt": 1955 is a Venus year. It will be governed by love and fertility. Astrological signs are the same as in 1942, the year Columbus discovered America.

Thus 1955 will begin a new world era.

TOKYO: Kenichi Takashima, the number one soothsayer in the celebrated fortune-telling alleyway of Shinjuku, Tokyo's Montmartre, says there will be a change of government in England and in France Mao Tse-tung will die and there will be a great struggle for power in Peking. Indo-China will slowly pass under Communist control. Australia will regain the Davis Cup.



Ely Culbertson, Sidney Lenz, referee Gruenthal, Jo Culbertson, Oswald Jacoby

nothing else could possibly have been put there."

Mr. Page has generous ideas and knows how to put them into practice; but to the amateur gardener he has a professional word to offer. "Learn to plant from the beginning, and learn how to do it yourself. If you take the trouble to get the right modern tools you can make planting what it ought to be—a pleasure and not a burden."

The Green Baize

THIS week twenty-four years ago the greatest contract bridge battle in history drew to its stormy close in the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York.

It was a battle between Ely and Jo Culbertson, and Sidney Lenz and Oswald Jacoby, but it was essentially a fight between contract bridge systems and the rich book and publicity rights that accompany them, with Culbertson betting \$5,000 against \$1,000 that his system would win over 150 rubbers.

Fortunes swayed dramatically, and the whole of America listened by nationwide hook-up to the rows and recriminations which periodically held up the play and which culminated, on December 28, in Jacoby quitting the game and